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THE FORGETFUL FUMBLEDON.

Old Mr. Fumbledon was a highly respectable solicitor, but he was nearly seventy years of age, and his powers were failing. He continued to practice, not so much on account of the comfortable income which his business yielded, though this, no doubt, was a strong inducement, as from sheer force of habit. He took things very easily, spending a good deal of his time in surreptitious dozing over the fire in his private room, leaving everything to his clerks. He was frequently urged by his friends to take a partner, and received innumerable offers of assistance from aspiring members of his profession; but he preferred to jog along in his drowsv, humdrum, indolent way by himself. The fact was that he had drifted into a comfortable, lethargic condition of mind, which caused him to shrink from the idea of making any change, and, having a m oderate private fortune, the dropping off by death of his old clients was no incentive to him to seek for new ones.

One afternoon Mr. Fumbledon was aroused from his post-prandial nap by the discreet preliminary rattle at the handle of his door which always preceded the entrance of his managing clerk, Mr. Bean. The lawyer hastily roused himself, and, having taken up the legal document which he invariably kept conveniently at hand in case of being disturbed, he appeared to be immersed in its contents when his clerk walked into the room. Mr. Bean, a sleek, elderly, respect-able-looking man, held a paper in his hand, and seemed somewhat excited

"What is it, Bean?" inquired his master.
"If you please, sir," said the clerk, "I was looking through the bundle of wills in the strong-room, when I came across this." "Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Fumbledon. with a start, on glancing at the document which his clerk produced. "A will of old Mr. Westmoreland?"

"The last will he made," said Mr. Bean, significantly. "What!" ejaculated the master, with sudden agitation; "do you mean to say that the will we proved was the-the-"The wrong one," interposed Mr. Bean, "Good gracious, Bean! This is very seri-

ous," cried old Fumbledon, in dismay, "What does it mean? I don't understand." "Mr. Westmoreland made two wills, one shortly after the other, about four years ago. I had forgotten the circumstance until the finding of this document reminded me of it. The first will should have been destroyed, but it evidently wasn't. When Mr. Westmoreland died we got his will out of the strong-room, but, unfortuately, happened to light upon the wrong one."

Mr. Fumbledon listened to this story with an almost ludicrous expression of consternation, while his clerk looked guilty and

"It was terribly careless of you, Mr. Bean," exclaimed the lawyer, nervously. "It never occurred to me that the previ-ous will had not been destroyed," said Mr.

Bean, meekly. "Have you compared this will with the one which has been proved?" inquired Mr. Fumbledon, ignoring the implied reproach. "Yes, sir," was the reply. "There is not very much difference between the two wills-in fact, the second was almost a copy of the first.'

"But there are differences, of course?" said Mr. Fumbledon apprehensively, as he turned over the pages of the document. "Oh, yes. There are differences, but all trifling, except a bequest to a nephew of the testator," replied Mr. Bean, with the air of a man who is shirking an unpleasant

"A nephew! You don't mean Mr. Edward 'No, sir. He was the residuary legatee and sole executor under both wills," said Mr. Bean reassuringly. "But by this will

here—I mean the real one—the testator left

£10,000 to a Mr. Cuthbert Dayne. to forget thatf' cried Mr. Fumbledon, putting his hand to his head with an agitated gesture. "How came you to forget it, Bean?" he added with increasing perturba-

"Well, sir, the will was made four years ago, and my riemory. I suppose, isn't as good as it once was. At all events, the circumstance passed clean out of my mind" said Bean doggedly.

"I am afraid that I am very much to blame," said old Mr. Fumbledon despair-

ingly. "The truth is, I hardly recollect Mr. Westmoreland making his will here at all. You are right, Bean. Our memory doesn't improve as we grow older. Have you found the drafts of these wills, and the correspondence relating to them?" he added, after a moment's reflection.

"No, I can't find the papers. They have been put away and not indexed. But I see from the call-book that the testator attended here upon the day of the date of the

tended here upon the day of the date of the will," added the clerk hastily.

"Really, Bean, it is too bad the way things are neglected by the clerks! I ought to be able to lay my hands on any papers I want. If the clerks had done their duty, and kept a proper index of the contents of the strong-room, this—this misfortune couldn't have happened," exclaimed Mr.

Fumbledon irritably.
"They want a deal of looking after,"
grumbled Bean in self-defense. "Yes; and I leave that to yon, Mr. Bean," said his master severely. "However, I'm afraid the papers wouldn't help us much in this instance. This is obviously the testator's last will. Now, that it is too late, I am beginning to recall the circumstances. Yes, he made two wills within a month of one another. It is a very awkward busi-

"What is to be done?" inquired Bean.
"Done! Why, Mr. Edward Westmoreland must be communicated with at once, and told about this will," said Mr. Fumbledon. "It is lucky he is a rich man." "He won't like it," said the clerk, with a

rather curious glance at his master. "He wasn't an agreeable client, you may remem-

"A peremptory, overbearing man," said Mr. Fumbledon, with a nervous shudder. "He will make himself very disagreeable and, of course, I shall have to bear the costs of the application to the Probate Court for a fresh grant. The exposure will be worse than the expense," he added plaintively. "I suppose there is no other course," suggested the clerk, looking at his master. "What other course is open to us?" said Mr. Fumbledon anxiously

"Well, can't we let it lie?" said Bean, lowering his voice and pointing to the docu-ment. "Who would be the wiser if I put it back where I found it? Years hence, when we are both gone, your successor, whoever he may be, will come across it. It won't matter much to us then," continued the clerk, with an uneasy laugh.
Old Mr. Fumbledon started guiltily at

the suggestion and evaded his companion's gaze. Possibly the same idea had already vaguely occurred to him, for his natural disposition was to shirk trouble and respon-

"After all, the matter is settled up and all parties are satisfied," continued Beau, encouragingly. "Mr. Cuthburt Dayne don't expect nothing-'No, no, Bean," interrupted old Mr. Fumbledon, with nervous energy, rousing him-self from his meditation. "It is out of the question. I wonder you venture to suggest such a thing," he added, quite angrily.

"Well, of course, its no affair of mine, sir," replied the clerk shortly. "Of course not. I beg your pardon, Mr. Bean. Your suggestion was well meant, and I did not intend to speak so hotly." said old Mr. Fumbledon. "But Mr. Cuthbert Dayne ought not to be kept out of his money. Get me a telegraph form. I will

ask Mr. Westmoreland to come up to see The clerk somewhat reluctantly went out and fetched a telegraph form, on which his master, with trembling fingers, wrote a brief message requesting Mr. Westmoreland to call upon him at once upon important business. Having! sent this off. Mr. Fumbledon resumed his chair by the fire with the unlucky document in his hand, to await the arrival of his client and to think

Mr. Fumbledon was, in the main, a very honest old gentleman, but he could not help regretting at odd moments, as he ruefully conned the newly discovered will, that it had not remained hidden away for an indefinite time longer. The testator, Mr. Westmoreland, had been one of his earliest clients and a personal friend, but Edward "To be sure! I remember. How came I | Westmoreland, the beir and residuary legatee, had not impressed the lawyer favorably. He was a loud-voiced, overbearing, bustling city man, who had chafed considerably at Mr. Fumbledon's leisurely, old-fashioned method of doing business, and had, in fact, treated his uncle's honored legal adviser with very scant courtesy. Mr. Fumbledon's dignity had been very much

inform this gentlemen of the oversight that had occurred, which involved the payment of a large sum of money to a third person, was by no means agreeable to the old lawyer, who anticipated, with considerable trepidation, that his news would be received with very ill grace.

However, Mr. Fumbledon did his best to nerve himself for the ordeal, and, after waiting a couple of hours in agitated suspense, it was a positive relief to him when he heard the strong, harsh voice of his client in the outer office.

client in the outer office.

"Well, Mr. Fumbledon, what is up now?"
inquired the gentlemen in question on being ushered into the room, in the tone of off-hand familiarty which always gave of-"You received my telegram?" inquired Mr. Fumbledon nervously, as he shook

"Of course. That is what brought me here," said Mr. Edward Westmoreland im-He was a tall, burly, red-faced, middle-aged man, with a very thick neck and an air of aggressive prosperity. His manners were abrupt and his voice loud. He lived

in a mansion at the West End, and had the

reputation of being worth a quarter of a "I have something very important to say to you," said Mr. Fumbledon, seating himself at his desk, on which the will lay. "Something good?" inquired his visitor. lancing curiously at the document from

beneath his bushy eyebrows.
"Something bad, I'm afraid," said Mr.
Fumbledon, tremulously. "The fact is, I
have found another will made by your "Another will!" repeated Edward West-moreland, incredulously.

"Yes; a more recent will than the one

which was proved!" said Mr. Fumbledon. "But it can't upset the other," remarked Edward Westmoreland quickly. "The other was revoked. It ought to have been destroyed. You are the executor and residuary legatee of both wills," said Mr. Fumbledon, reassuringly,

"Where did you find it?" demanded Edward Westmoreland, with a quick, scrutinizing glance, which the old lawyer found very embarrassing. "In my strong-room down stairs, about an hour or so ago," said Mr. Fumbledon. "Until then I do not know-or, rather, I had

forgotten-that is, I thought there was only one will in existence. "What is the effect of it?" inquired Ed ward Westmoreland, ignoring the lawyer's embarrassment and staring at the document upon the desk like a hungry animal

"I was going to explain the circum-"Never mind that now," interrupted Edward Westmoreland gruffly. "What does the will sav. "It is substantially the same as the one that has been proved, with one important

exception. There is a legacy of £10,000 to a cousin of yours," said Mr. Fumbledon des-"Let me look," said Edward Westmore land, stretching forth his hand for the will with an ominous frown.
Mr. Fumbledon gave it to him, and then proceeded to explain how it had come to oe overlooked. But his companion, with

marked discourtesy, made no pretense of listening. He read the will-which was very short-twice over attentively with knitted brows, and then commenced, rather ostentationsly, to scrutinize the signature of the testator. Mr. Fumbledom sat watching him uneasily, momentarily expecting an unpleasant scene "Who found this will?" inquired Edward Westmoreland, after a considerable

"Do you mean who discovered it in my strong-room?" said Mr. Fumbledon in sur-"My head clerk, Mr. Bean." "Well, Mr. Fumbledon," said Edward

Westmoreland, after having apparently digested this information during another short silence, "this is an extraordinary af-"It is unfortunate, perhaps, for you," said | signed." Mr. Fumbledon with mild emphasis on the "I say it is extraordinary, sir," said Ed-ward Westmoreland, looking at him some-

what strangely and folding up the docu-"Are you going to take the will away?" inquired the lawyer in vague alarm.
"Certainly. I have a right to it. I am the executor," said the other half detiantly. "No doubt you have. I suppose you will take steps to obtain a fresh grant of pro-

bate," said Mr. Fumbledon, feeling considerably puzzled as Edward Westmoreland stowed away the will in his coat-pocket

and rose from his chair. "I shall take advice. After what has hap-yened, Mr. Fumbledon, you will not be surprised at my seeking it elsewhere," said Edward Westmoreland significantly. "You can take advice from whomsoever you please," returned Mr. Fumbledon, with

a touch of spirit. "I must particularly ask you not to speak about this discovery to anybody—especially to your clerk Bean—until I have seen you again about it," said Edward Westmoreland, in his most peremptory tone.
"When am I to expect to hear from you?"

"When am I to expect to hear from you?"
inquired the lawyer stiffly.
"Very shortly. Possibly to-morrow."
Edward Westmoreland left the room as he spoke, without vouchsafing any farewell salutation, and old Mr. Fumbledon felt both relieved and annoyed. The interview had proved less disagreeable than he had anticipated; but, upon the whole, Mr. Fumbledon would have been better satisfied if Edward Westmoreland had roundly abused him for his carelessness for that abused him for his carelessness, for that gentleman's singular reticence put him in a flutter. He endeavored in vain to recall to mind the circumstances under which he had prepared the second will, and it fidgeted him a good deal to find, on searching through old diaries and other contemporary records, that not a single note of the transaction existed. He was very much disturbed at this, for though such a state of things hardly surprised him, considering his slip-shod, indolent method of conducting his business, he foresaw that the omission would give rise to unpleasant comment

if Edward Westmoreland should raise any question about the will. However, he endeavored to console himself with the hope that Edward Westmorelard, upon calm reflection, would accept the situation, especially as £10,000, though a large sum, was not of any moment to so rich a man. He informed Mr. Bean that Edward Westmoreland had taken away the will, but he kept his misgivings to himself and succeeded in concealing his uneasiness. After a few days he began to recover his equanimity and to take courage from the lesson which his long professional experience had taught him, namely, that an an-

ticipated evil rarely comes to pass. But it unfortuately turned out in this instance that his experience was at fault, for about a week later Mr. Edward Westmoreland called upon him again, and by his first words conveyed to the lawyer that his worst forebodings were likely to be realized. "Mr. Fumbledon, there is something very seriously wrong about this will," he said in a solemn, determined tone. "Impossible!" exclaimed the lawyer, turn-

"I want to ask you a serious question, said Edward Westmoreland, producing the unlucky document from his pocket. "Wi you tell me please where this alleged will was signed? I observe that your name is signed to it as one of the attesting witnes-

"Here of course," replied Mr. Fumble don unhesitatingly. "Quite sure," said the lawyer, still more emphatically. I never transacted any

business with your uncle except in my own "Are you sure that you did not go down to his house in Shropshire?" Inquired Edward Westmorleand, looking keenly at him.

"Come, Mr. Fumbledon, this is very im portant," said Edward Westmoreland in a bullying tone. "If you can't recollect for certain, oblige me by referring to your dia-"It is unnecessary, for I was never at your uncle's place in Shropshire in my

"Then that settles it!" exclaimed Edward Westmoreland triumphantly, with an em phatic bang upon the table with his great hand. "Mr. Fumbledon," he added with impressive solemnity, "I can prove, by over-whelming evidence, that my uncle was in Shropshire, and never came up to town at all, on that day when the alleged will was

"Possibly I filled the wrong date," said Mr. Fumbledon, turning pale.
"No, you didn't, Mr. Fumbledon; you wouldn't be such a fool as that," said Edward Westmoreland impatiently. "I wished to satisfy myselt on that point; but, in addition, I can prove that the signature to the document is not my uncle's handwrit-

"That is rather a strong assertion." murmured the lawyer, too much startled to feel

"I wonder that you did not find it out yourself," said Edward Westmoreland, glancing contemptuously at the signature, and then handing the document to the lawyer. "I saw at once that it was not gen-uine. I have consulted experts, who are prepared so swear that it is not my uncle's

handwriting."

"I—I certainly feel no doubt about it," replied Mr. Fumbledon, staring in a bewildered manner at the signature. "I see nothing unusual in it. Besides, as you said, I was one of the attesting witnesses," he

added, more confidently.
"Now, Mr. Fumbledon, I ask you, look at your own signature." said Edward West-moreland, suddenly leaning forward, with his hands on his knees. "Do you mean to

tell me that that is your signature?"

"Of course," said the lawyer, with a start.

"There is no 'of course' about it," said
Edward Westmoreland, raising his voice.
"I have submitted that alleged signature of
yours, Mr. Fumbledon, with half-a-dozen letters of yours in my possession, to the experts, and their opinion is unanimous."
"That it is not my signature?" exclaimed the lawyer, leaning back in his chair in

"Emphatically not," asserted Mr. Edward "It is not a very good signature, certainly," said Mr. Fumbledon, with a nervous laugh, as he scrutinized it again. "Butbut I would certainly swear to it.'

"Oh! It strikes you as not being a good specimen, eh?" said Edward Westmoreland "But I don't doubt it. My clerk Bean was the other attesting witness," said Mr.

Fumbledon meaningly. "I am not going to dispute the genuine ness of Mr. Bean's signature," returned Edward Westmoreland, to the lawyer's further bewilderment. "We will talk about him presently. Meanwhile, I want to ask you very seriously. Mr. Fumbledon, whether you have any recollection whatever about the signing of that document? "I recollect your uncle coming here and signing several wills at different times. don't pretend to have any clear recollection of any particular occasion. But this is your uncle's signature, and, if it were not, my name would not be signed there,

said the lawyer doggedly. "Mr. Fumbledon, that is no answer to my question. Can you refer to your books or to any record among your papers to show that my uncle ever came here and signed this will?" said Edward Westmoreland, holding up the document. "Your uncle's name is entered in the call

book on that particular day-at least Bean tells me so," replied Mr. Fumbledon, who was beginning to feel doubtful, in spite of "Bean says so!" repeated Edward Westmoreland, with significant emphasis. "We must have Mr. Bean in, if you have no objection. The long and short of the matter is, Mr. Fumbledon, that you remember

nothing whatever about this precious doc-"I beg your pardon," said the lawyer; "I remember perfectly well being instructed about that legacy to your cousin. I can recall to mind your uncle telling me in this room that he was his sister's son, and l think in business at Liverpool," said Mr. Fumbledon, with conviction.

"Ahem! Well, that is very extraordinary, for I happen to know that the young man gave particular oftense to my uncle about the time of the will by an imprudent marriage," returned Mr. Edward Westmoreland, almost fiercely. "I am sure I am not mistaken. But le us have Bean in. He is younger than I am and no doubt he can recall to mind all the

circumstances. He will have something to say, too, about the genuineness of the sig-Edward Westmoreland, who seemed rather taken aback at the lawyer's insistence, looked angry and sulky, but he said nothing, and Mr. Fumbledon sounded the bell upon his table with a secret feeling of satisfaction at getting the moral support of his clerk. The truth was that the old gentleman's nerves had been rather upset,

and, in spite of an inward conviction to into believing that Edward Westmoreland was right in asserting that the will was a But the sight of Mr. Bean's face, when he entered the room in obedience to the sum-mons, gave his old master a shock which

rose from his seat immediately and turned the key in the door. "Mr. Bean," he said abruptly, before the lawyer could speak, "I have been telling Mr. Fumbledon that my uncle's signature Mr. Fumbledon that my uncle's signature and his own signature to this will, which you mysteriously produced the other day, are forgeries. Now, what have you to say?"

Old Mr. Fumbledon experienced a thrill of indignation at hearing this language addressed to his trusted clerk, and was about to interpose an indignant remonstrance, when Bean murmured sullenly—

"I have nothing to say."

"I have nothing to say."
"What! Nothing to say?" repeated Mr. Fumbledon, aghast.
"I didn't mean any harm," said the man, hanging his head, and evading his master's

"Oh! you have found out I suspected you.
I suppose?" said Edward Westmoreland sternly. "It is as well, perhaps; for you had better make a clean breast of it. I dare say you noticed I took the precaution to bring a detective with me.'

"It ain't done you any harm," said Bean, still hanging his head, but speaking im-"No, it hasn't; but you havn't done yourself any particular good, my friend," said Edward Westmoreland. "Come, out with it! Or would you rather make you confes-

sion before a detective?" "I found the will, but it was unsigned, murmured Bean, with very white lips "The testator gave instructions for that will, but he changed his mind, and never signed it. It was engrossed ready for signature, but for some reason he never at tended to sign it."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed old Mr. Fun bledon, to whom the words conveyed suff cient explanation of his own confused and vague recollections, "I-I was certain such a will was prepared. "What was your motive? What object had you in trying to pass off the will-in forging the signatures?" inquired Edward Westmoreland, mercilessly

"-I thought Mr. Fumbledon would act

different to what he did," said the man, al-

most in a whisper, after a lengthened "Pay you to keep the secret, eh? Or per haps you hoped to black-mail me!" interro gated Edward Westmoreland. "Then I suppose that you purposely sup

pressed the papers, and probably destroyed any entries that might have guided me?" exclaimed Mr. Fumbledon, with rising in-"I ain't done any harm," repeated the man, still turning away from his employer "You scoundrel!" ejaculated the old lawyer, in mingled wrath and amazement. "I

suppose you made a fictitious entry in the "Pooh! We have got to the bottom of the mystery, I think," said Edward Westmoreland, turning contemptuously away from the man, who remained silent. shall we do with the fellow? Shall I call in the detective and give him in charge?" "I hope, gentlemen, you will have mercy for the sake of my family," said the man in a choked voice. "I've got nothing by it.

Nobody is harmed "Let him go," said Mr. Fumbledon, who was genuinely affected by the treachery of his old clerk. "I-I hope the thought of his ingratitude and of his sin will be sufficient punishment. "Then I suppose that this had better be destroyed?" said Edward Westmoreland,

taking up the will from the table "Yes, I suppose so," said old Mr. Fumble-don, absently; but the truth was he scarcely heeded the question. He was gazing reproachfully at Bean over his spectacles, his heart full of bitterness. "There is no object in keeping the forged document," observed Edward Westmore land, with a rather elaborate air of indif-

Just at that moment Bean looked up and encountered the gaze of his master. The troubled look upon the old gentleman's face appeared to have an almost electrical effect. For a single instant the man cowered before him, and then he suddenly lifted his head with a desperate gesture, and cried

"Stop him! For God's sake don't let him destroy it. There is nothing wrong with | tons never come off, and I'm sure yours the will. I have lied; he made me; he came to my house and tempted me. But I can't do it; I can't keep it up. Mr. Fumbledon, sir, catch hold of the document!"

"You d—d scoundre!" cried Edward Westmoreland, dropping the will upon the completed his discomfiture. The man was livid, and he came in with a frightened, hang-dog look, which denoted terror and extreme nervousness. Apparently, Edward Westmoreland was struck by the struck of the lawyer half involuntarily put out his hand and possessed himself of livid as though that was the usually traveled route."

the paper. "It's no use your looking at me like that, Mr. Westmoreland. I couldn't do it—no, not for twenty times what you offered me. I know I promised, and I've lied, and I den't dessive any credit for speaking the truth now. But Mr. Fumbledon has been a good master to me, and I didn't know how hard it was to be false to him—not till he spoke of ingratitude just

"Out of the way, confound you! You shall suffer for this. I'll prosecute you for obtaining money by false pretenses if the story you told me isn't true," cried Edward Westmoreland, striding to the door. "I shall take the precaution of writing to Mr. Cuthbert Dayne, Mr. Westmoreland, and informing him of his legacy," said Mr. Fumbledon, significantly, as the other disappeared, "and I think you would be wise not to talk about prosecution."

-London Truth. SHAD AT THREE DOLLARS. Washington's Table Would Not Set an Ex-

Philadelphia Record. During President Washington's residence in Philadelphia the family occupied a mansion on Market street near Sixth, and it required a retinue of servants to wait on them. Chief of the household staff was Sam Fraunces, the steward, and a first-rate steward, too, but his ambition and love of display, not to mention his extravagance, more than once led him into trouble, Nearly every week he would receive a sound drubbing from his master because of his lack of economy in household matters. The poor fellow used to sigh and nurse his sorrow. "Well, he may discharge me; he may kill me if he will; but while he is President of the United States, and I have the honor to be his steward, his establishment shall be supplied with the best of everything that the whole country can

It was this vaulting ambition which, one day in February, led Fraunces to serve up for the President's dinner, in lieu of the customary Saturday codfish, a fine Delaware shad-the first of the season. To Washington's question: "Fraunces, what fish is this!" the servant replied, "A shad, sir, a very fine shad. I knew your Excellency was very fond of this kind of fish, and I was so fortunate as to secure this one in market-a solitary one, and the first of the

"The price, sir, the price?" demanded Washington, pausing with the first morsel half-way to his lips. "Three-three dollars," stammered poor Fraunces.
"Take it away," were the thundering

words of his master. "Take it away, sir; it shall never be said that my table sets such an example of luxury and extrava-Fraunces was crestfallen, but his associ-ates of the servants' hall were the gainers by his folly, for they feasted regally off the

three-dollar shad that day.

"When I get a bright idea I always want to pass it along," said a lady as she sat watching a young girl sewing. "Do your buttons ever come off, Lena? "Ever? They are always doing it. They

are ironed off, washed off and pulled off, until I despair. I seem to shed buttons at "Make use of these two hints when you are sewing them on, then, and see if they make any difference: When you begin, before you lay the button on the cloth, put the thread through so that the knot will be on the right side. That leaves it under the button, and prevents it from being worn or

ironed away, and thus beginning the loos-"Then, before you begin sewing, lay a large pin across the button so that all your threads will go over the pin. After you have finished filling the holes with thread draw out the pin and wind your thread round and round beneath the button. That makes a compact stem to sustain the possible pulling and wear of the button-h "It is no exaggeration to say that my but-

won't if you use my method of sewing." Sure Sign of a Holiday.

Detroit Free Press. "I knew Tuesday was a legal holiday."